

Wine and Roses



*The astonishing rise
and sad fall of
Caroline Hamilton Lorillard
of Tuxedo Park*

John Hamilton



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Caroline Hamilton Lorillard of Tuxedo Park*

John Hamilton

They are not long the days of wine and roses:
 Out of a misty dream
Our path emerges for a while, then closes
 Within a dream.

Earnest Dowson 1867–1900

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Foreword

There is no hint in the meagre family records that survive from the time; no whisper of this extraordinary tale in any oral tradition passed down through the family. A scrap of paper from John Paxton Hamilton to his half-brother, my grandfather William Robert Hamilton, gives details of their father's date and place of death in the States, but no more. A letter from John's widow Margaret to William in 1899 mentions the contact that John had had with the family in America and names his uncles George and John as well as Mr Anderson, the widowed husband of their sister Alison. Margaret also mentions Pierre Lorillard and Jaffray & Co, but not Caroline. And finally the family tree, which William had just sent to Margaret, only shows Caroline as married to P. Lorillard – no date, no place, not even a Christian name for the groom.

William had clearly intended to pursue his researches into the family after producing his family tree. But in the event he had a son, James, and never went back to it. Perhaps he felt he had uncovered as much as he wanted to. His closest relatives in the States were all dead and he knew virtually nothing of the next generation. He must have had some thought of contacting the Lorillards, but we will never know whether he followed it up by writing to New York. If he did write, he may not have got a reply. Caroline was not one for keeping in touch with her relations, American or British. But if he read the society pages of the newspapers, William might have found out more. Today one need only type the name Lorillard into Google.

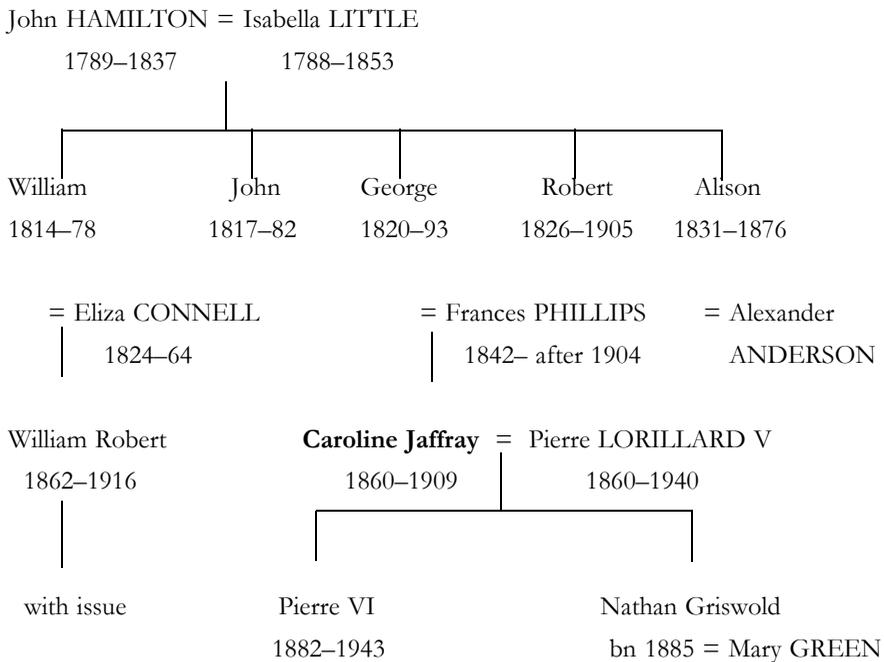
Both wine and roses can give great pleasure. But too much wine can cause a hangover; and the rose has a thorn.

John Hamilton

Burton Joyce, October 2012

Family Trees

Hamiltons



Phillips

Rev Dr William W PHILLIPS = Frances SYMINGTON

1796–1865

bn 1799

Symington = Margaret Ann PHILLIPS

Anna Frances = Edward S JAFFRAY

bn 1819

bn c.1821

bn c.1825

Frances = George HAMILTON

1842– after 1904

1820–93

Caroline Jaffray(1) = Pierre LORILLARD V = (2) Mary HILL/BEARD

1860–1909

1860–1940

Pierre VI

Nathan Griswold = Mary GREEN

1882–1943

bn 1885

c.1884–1969

1. The Scottish Background

The Hamilton family had been established in the Scottish Borders since at least 1700, which is as far back as firm records have been found. This branch of the family had moved from Earlstoun to St Boswell's in the eighteenth century and in doing so changed its name from Familton or Famelton (many spelling variants occur in the records). The family was proud to call itself 'portioners', a term used only in this part of Scotland to denote those who owned or at least occupied a part or portion of a once larger land holding. They were thus financially and socially the inferiors of the 'heritors', but not quite on the bottom rung of the ladder.

At the start of the following century John Hamilton, born in 1789 and married to Isabella Little from Cavers, was a handloom weaver. At that time this occupation was well paid. The introduction of mechanised spinning meant that a great deal of cheap thread was available for making into cloth, but mechanical weaving was not well developed. Handloom weaving, usually using looms provided by an agent, who also bought the finished cloth for onward sale for making up, became a popular occupation for huge numbers, especially in the rural districts of Scotland and northern England.

In time, however, mechanised weaving became more and more sophisticated and easily undercut the price previously paid to the handloom weavers. With both demand for their services and the price paid for their cloth constantly falling, the handloom weavers fell into poverty. Their penurious condition was recognised nationally and led to parliamentary inquiries, though this did little to alleviate their suffering. John Hamilton became a 'merchant' (doubtless a village shopkeeper) and stayed in St Boswell's.

He died in 1837, shortly before his forty-eighth birthday. In view of the later history of the family recounted here, it is worth noting that a few years earlier he had acquired a thatched cottage in St Boswell's. With this came the right to cut as many

‘divots’ (turfs) from a specified piece of ground ‘as will keep the house in sufficient wind and watertight condition’, the traditional walling of rural homes in Scotland at this time consisting of simply loose stones interlaced with turfs.

John and Isabella had five children, four boys followed by a girl. The eldest, William born in 1814, became a Commission Agent, that is a salesman paid only for what he sold, travelling around southern Scotland offering his wares. His four siblings all emigrated to the States like very many others, the U.S.A. being much the most popular destination for British emigrants at that time; emigration to the Empire (Australia, Canada and so on) only became widespread later in the century.

The first to go – probably in 1835 – were John, the second son then aged eighteen and ‘penniless,’ and his younger brother George, who must have been just fifteen years old. John eventually settled in Racine, right by Lake Michigan some sixty miles north of Chicago. He set up in business in a modest way. His sister Alison, the youngest of the family, joined him there later and married a farmer Alexander Anderson, who had also emigrated from Scotland. They broke new ground at Norway, a few miles west of Racine in an area much settled by Swedish and Norwegian emigrants – to such an extent that today one could imagine oneself in southern Sweden when travelling there. Here William too joined them later, having left his two sons John Paxton and William Robert, both still boys, in Scotland in the care of his late wife’s relatives.

Robert, the youngest brother, emigrated in 1849 and quickly joined the Gold Rush, travelling overland to California. Later he spent a year in the U.S Cavalry as a saddler in the latter part of the war. It is possible he became part of a detachment posted into the wilds of Arizona to keep a watch on the Apaches. He married twice, his second wife coming from Massachusetts, where he and his family settled. He worked mostly as a farmer.

John and Isabella are buried in the old kirkyard of St Boswell’s with other members of the family. It is a quiet and beautiful spot in a crook of the River Tweed surrounded by farmland a mile or two from the village. This is Walter Scot country with his beloved Eildon Hills clearly visible from the burial ground. Appropriately the tale of John and Isabella’s granddaughter has many of the features of a Borders romance.

2 George in New York

George, the third son, was born in St Boswell's in 1820. As we have seen, he arrived in America at the age of fifteen in 1835, no doubt as penniless as his elder brother John, whom he travelled with. He settled in New York and became a dry goods trader. 'Dry goods' in American usage at that time were almost anything that was not groceries or hardware merchandise, in this case mostly clothes and textiles.

It seems certain he worked for Jaffray and Co at 350 Broadway in Manhattan. Perhaps George met members of the family at the First Presbyterian Church of New York, then with a church in Wall Street – later it moved to Fifth Avenue.

The Jaffrays were of Scottish origin but came to New York via London in the 1810s. Robert and his nephew Edward Somerville Jaffray soon had a thriving business as dry goods merchants. In 1860 Edward gave his wealth to the census taker as \$450,000. He and his family lived in Manhattan with eight living-in servants to look after them. They were very rich, but not super-rich.

Edward Jaffray married Anna Frances Phillips probably in 1843/4, when she was only 18 or 19 years old.^[1] She was one of the twelve children of the Rev Dr William Wirt Phillips D.D. and his wife Frances Symington. The Phillips were of Dutch origin, tracing their ancestry back to the time when New York was a Dutch settlement. William, born in 1796, was ordained in 1818 and took charge of the First Presbyterian Church of New York, as it was known, in 1826. He soon established himself as one of the leading churchmen of the city and oversaw the removal of the church from Wall Street to Fifth Avenue. He held not only many ecclesiastical appointments but also some secular ones: he was for example a member of the Council of New York University. His reputation in the city was clearly very high.

Although the full list of the children of William and Frances has not been produced, it seems their first child was a boy. Born in 1819 when his mother was only nineteen or twenty years old (she was born around 1799 in Canada), he was called

Symington after her family. As a young man Symington moved to Bristol, Pennsylvania, apparently to join other members of the family already living there. He became a twine manufacturer and later deputy federal revenue collector. He also entered local politics first as town councillor and later in life as a representative in the State legislature. He died in 1898. He married Margaret Ann Phillips, a cousin, around 1841. She gave birth to their first child Frances in 1842. Again Margaret was very young, being no more than twenty when Frances was born.

Nothing is known of Frances' early life, but she almost certainly moved to New York as a teenager to live with her aunt Anna Frances Jaffray, her father Symington's younger sister. For it must have been here that she met George Hamilton, now in his late thirties – almost as old as her father. They got married, probably in 1858, when Frances was just sixteen years old (the custom of early marriage for women seems to be an American one. It is certainly very different from normal British usage, where for centuries marriage before the age of majority at twenty-one was unusual). On 14th January 1859 she and George had their first and only child, a girl whom they named Caroline Jaffray.^[2]

At this time George felt sufficiently well-established call himself a Gentleman, though this cannot have meant that he did not work. He and Frances employed two black living-in servants as well as a black nanny for the baby. They continued to live in Manhattan. It is clear he flourished. In 1870 George describes himself as a merchant. With the family at their apartment at 32 West Twenty-first Street were four servants, three female and one male. The family was still here in 1881 when Caroline got married. The description of the wedding reception (see below) suggests that this contained an entrance hall of some size with two reception rooms ('parlours') and comprised at least two floors. The report also claims that 2,000 invitations were sent out. But this must be wrong. An apartment of this size would have been hard put to hold 200 guests. But clearly it was considered sufficiently respectable for the wedding to be held there.

George died in 1893 at the age of seventy-three. Frances or Fanny, as she seems to have been known, then took up travelling and eventually settled in Europe, probably Switzerland, dying sometime after January 1904.

Note 1. With little direct information at this time on births and marriages, dates of birth have been taken from later census information, hence the lack of precision.

Note 2. Many websites give Caroline's year of birth as 1861. The error has probably arisen because she gave 1861 as her year of birth on her passport application. But she is listed as aged one year in the census of March 1860 and her gravestone states 'Born Jan 14 1859'. Various dates too are given for the birth of her husband, though all are agreed on the year, which was 1860.

3 The Lorillards

Unlike many of her immediate female relatives Caroline was of full age when she married, being twenty-two years old. Her husband Pierre Lorillard was a year younger than her. He was known as Pierre Lorillard V and the couple as Mr and Mrs Pierre Lorillard junior, for his father Pierre Lorillard IV and mother were still alive. The Lorillards were of French Huguenot descent and had come to New York via the Netherlands after their expulsion from France. In 1760 an ancestor had set up a tobacco business in New York and this thrived under a succession of family owners, taking advantage of the enormous increase in both population and wealth locally and nationally during the nineteenth century. Pierre Lorillard III was the first man to whom the epithet ‘millionaire’ was applied, although he was in fact neither the first such nor America’s richest man at the time.

His son, Pierre IV, Caroline’s father-in-law, was hugely energetic and ‘a man of formidable presence and imperious manner’ (*American Heritage* magazine 1978 volume 29, issue 5). He was not content to be just a businessman. He was a racing enthusiast and used the great wealth he gained from his business to establish a major racing stable. In fact his main claim to fame in some circles is as the owner of the first American-trained horse to win the Epsom Derby – Iroquois in 1881. At the same time he was helping to make Newport, Rhode Island, into a yachting centre.

But in 1885 he sold his estate there to Cornelius Vanderbilt and used the money to develop the 13,000 acres he had inherited in Orange County, New York state, about forty miles from the city. Here with the Astors and others he built a luxury retreat complete with clubhouse, called Tuxedo Park. It served New York’s super-rich elite, who liked to be known as America’s ‘Ultra-fashionable Peerage’, and was renowned for snobbery, exclusiveness and formal manners.^[1] Some of them did indeed marry into the British nobility including Pierre’s daughter Maude, who married Cecil Baring, one of the banker family. He became the 3rd Baron Revelstoke and one



Pierre Lorillard IV, Caroline's formidable father-in-law.

of his sisters married a Spencer, becoming in course of time Princess Diana's great-grandmother.

Pierre IV separated from his wife after several years of bad-tempered marriage – she caused a stir by refusing to visit him when dying, attend his funeral or wear mourning. He ceased going to Tuxedo, presumably because his wife was there, and in fact spent much of his time in England. It is quite possible, considering his connection with tobacco, that he got cancer, something virtually unmentionable at the time. In July 1901 he returned very sick from England after watching the Ascot Gold Cup and could only just be got to Fifth Avenue Hotel before he died on 7th July 1901. He was attended by members of his immediate family including Caroline and her husband. He was sixty-seven years old, and left an estate worth four million dollars. He now warrants a full page biography in Wikipedia.

Note 1. See separate note on Tuxedo Park and Club below. It was from this that the dinner jacket became known as 'the tuxedo'. Pierre IV or his son Griswold are often credited with introducing this form of men's wear, but this is now known to be incorrect. In fact King Edward VII as Prince of Wales had more of a hand in it.

4 The Life of Luxury

It was the eldest son of this man that Caroline married. As may be expected, not only her wedding but her life thereafter as Mrs Pierre Lorillard junior – or at least the public part of it – was reported in much detail in the society pages of the press. The following extracts, which must be only a small part of what was in total written about her, speak for themselves. It is almost enough just to quote from them with little additional comment, except to add that she bore her husband two sons: Pierre VI born March 1882 and Nathan Griswold born June 1885. The latter was always known as Griswold, a name derived from Catherine Griswold who married Pierre III.

But first the only known physical description of her taken from her passport application.

United States Passport Application 1899

I Mrs Caroline Lorillard jnr a native and loyal citizen of the United States do hereby apply... for a passport for myself accompanied by maid & man servant... I was born at New York in the State of New York on 14th day of January 1861 [sic] my father being a naturalised citizen... my permanent residence being at Tuxedo Park NY, where I follow the occupation of Lady...

Sworn 12th day of January 1899.

Description of Applicant

Age 37 years

Mouth small

Stature 5 feet 7 ½ inches Eng. Chin round

Forehead High

Hair Blonde

Eyes Blue Complexion Fair

Nose Regular

Face Oval



The only known photograph of Caroline.

The New York Times 17th Feb 1881

LIFE IN OUR CITY SOCIETY

Mr Pierre Lorillard jr married – the decorations, presents and guests.

Mr Pierre Lorillard jr and Miss Caroline Jaffray Hamilton, daughter of Mr George Hamilton, were married yesterday afternoon at the First Presbyterian Church in Fifth Avenue and Twelfth Street, of which the great-grandfather of the bride, the Rev. Dr. Phillips, was Pastor in 1826. The ceremony took place at 3 o'clock... The church was handsomely decorated. Back of the pulpit stood a tall *Seaforthia elegans* [Solitaire Palm] and on either side of this were large palms... forming a complete background of green, terminating in floral decorations at the extremes of the altar rail. The front of the pulpit was decorated with smilax caught up with poinsettias... The altar rail was also decorated with smilax, a bunch of white roses... The edifice was thronged. Music was furnished by Lander's orchestra.

The groom and the best man met the bride at the altar. She entered on the arm of her father, and was attired in white satin, trimmed with Brussels lace and orange blossoms, and carried a bouquet of lilies. The bridesmaids were eight in number [including] Miss Jaffray and two Miss Lorillards. All were dressed alike in white silk and tulle veils. There were six ushers.

The reception was held at No:32 West Twenty-first Street from 3.30 to 8 o'clock. The decorations at the house were very beautiful. The staircase was decorated with rose-studded smilax and a large bank of ferns hid the upper hall from view. A screen of smilax in bloom did similar service in the rear part .of the lower hall. Before each of the large mirrors in the parlours were massed fine arrangements of cut flowers...The most important feature of the decorations was a most beautiful marriage bell which hung between the parlours...

The wedding presents were displayed without cards in an upper room. Among them were many beautiful jewels, including a large brooch of diamonds in a triple row

surrounding an immense sapphire. This was a gift of the father of the groom. There were quantities of gold and silver ware, repousse sets and separate articles in Venetian glass... Several tea sets of hand-decorated china, and two silver tea sets... Another gift was a mammoth repousse centre-piece... and still another, a complete silver set of knives, forks and spoons, comprising more than 200 pieces... an ornamental clock... had a base of gold and enamel, with two decorated square uprights supporting an irregular arch from which hung a double chain...

There were over 2,000 invitations to the reception and the attendance was very large. Among the guests were Mr & Mrs E.S.Jaffray... Mrs Cavendish Bentinck... Mrs Oliver Harriman... [several] Lorillards (etc) [N.B. no mention of the bride's mother or of any Phillips or Hamiltons, but the guest list is but no means complete.]

The New York Times 26th March 1909

LORILLARDS MARRIED IN 1881

... Mrs Lorillard at the time of her marriage was living with her father at 32 West Twenty First Street...

The New York Times 13th Dec 1881

The Merry Patriarchs: Opening the Season by a Ball at

Delmonico's.

The first Patriarchs' ball of the season was given last evening at Delmonico's and proved a very successful affair. Four hundred and fifty invitations were issued, but there were not more than about 375 persons present... For the first time in the history of the Patriarchs' balls, the ball-room was lighted with a pale, straw-colored light, which is now in vogue in Paris. The room on the Broadway side of the ball-room... was converted into a salon where tea, chocolate and ices were served. To furnish a pleasing contrast... the salon was lighted in a pink light... A smaller ball-room was extemporized out of the drawing-room on Fifth Avenue, where music was

furnished by a separate orchestra... Among the guests were Mr & Mrs Lorillard... Mr & Mrs Pierre Lorillard jnr... Mr & Mrs William K Vanderbilt...

The New York Times 14th Dec 1883

The first Assembly of the Season: Dancing at Delmonico's.

The first 'assembly' of the season attracted a brilliant throng of dancers to Delmonico's last night... The two balconies accommodated Bernstein's and Neye's orchestras. Each one of the 50 subscribers was privileged to invite nine persons... The reception committee were Mrs William Astor [and others]... Among those present were Mrs Roosevelt, Mrs Cornelius Vanderbilt, Mrs Pierpont Morgan, Mrs & Mrs Pierre Lorillard jr...

The New York Times 31st March 1895

Society in Lent.

The circus has its followers. On the opening night [of Barnum's Circus] there was a goodly scattering of fashionable in the boxes. I noticed Mr & Mrs Pierre Lorillard jr... The Newport and Lenox seasons will open with promise – if present indications are to be relied upon... Life at Newport is conventional. At Lenox life is lived differently. All depends upon the jollity of individual house parties, which vary from ten to twenty guests throughout the season. Life is more easy, more free than at Newport. The householders assemble year after year, and a degree of intimacy exists which is not permitted at Newport; and this ensures by the constant entertainments given at various homes, a merry round of gayety... The Vanderbilts [and others] rally at Lenox. The Astors, Lorillards [and others] at Newport.

The New York Times 29th Oct 1899

THE SOCIAL SEASON IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

The news and gossip of London centre on the war in the Transvaal. Nearly all the leading families are interested as many have sons among the fighters... The English American women are very much interested. Lady Randolph Churchill's son [Winston] goes out as a correspondent...

The Autumn ball at Tuxedo on Friday evening was the largest, liveliest and most successful the club has ever held... [yesterday] in the afternoon Mrs Pierre Lorillard Jr gave a reception with music at her villa.

The New York Times 2nd Jan 1900

WHAT IS DOING IN SOCIETY

New Year's Day... like its predecessors of the last fifteen years, was a very dull one socially in New York. Society was in the country... At Tuxedo the day was celebrated with more stir than usual. The opening of the new racquets and tennis courts brought the lovers of those sports out in force... Among the cottagers^[1] at Tuxedo those who entertained yesterday were Mr & Mrs Pierre Lorillard jr... Mrs Pierre Lorillard jr gave at Keewaydin, her Tuxedo residence, yesterday afternoon a musicale for 200 invited guests. After the musicale tea was served. The music was furnished by the Dannreuther Quartet of New York.



Keewaydin, the home that Caroline and Pierre had built in Tuxedo Park.

Note 1. Tuxedo Park residents liked to call their mansions ‘cottages’ and themselves to be known as ‘cottagers’. This distinguished them from the non-resident Tuxedo Club members – see *Tuxedo Park and Club* below.

The New York Times 2nd Jan 1900

SOCIETY AT TUXEDO PARK

The annual New Year’s ball took place at the Tuxedo Club here tonight. It surpassed all others in gayety. The clubhouse has been packed throughout the week. Dancing commenced at 10 o’clock and was interrupted at 1 o’clock when supper was served in the large dining room... Two Hungarian orchestras played alternately... Some of those present were Mr & Mrs Pierre Lorillard Jr... In the afternoon Mrs P Lorillard Jr gave a musicale for 300 guests [See previous article – same newspaper, same day, different article, different number of guests!]

The New York Times 4th May 1900

Mr and Mrs Pierre Lorillard Jr (and friends) are touring in California. They were in San Francisco last week.

The New York Times 30th September 1900

TUXEDO PARK HORSE SHOW

Mrs Lorillard drove the winners in the Pacer Class.

The second day of the Tuxedo Horse Show was more largely attended by the society colony than yesterday...The most interesting event of the morning’s show was in the pacer pair class under fifteen hands, an extra prize being offered... for entries driven by ladies. The prize went to Mrs P.Lorillard Jr for best horses... [driving her

husband's horses Beau and Airs & Graces. He also won several prizes in various classes at the show.]

The New York Times 17th Feb 1901

SOME HAPPENINGS IN GOOD SOCIETY

From last accounts the Riviera is frightfully cold and extremely dull. The season has not been a success at Cannes... The number of Americans in the Riviera are comparatively few. Mrs Pierre Lorillard left Paris on the 8th inst., bound for the South of France where she was to stop until April.

The New York Times 29th Dec 1901

TO ENTERTAIN THE PRESIDENT

Society at Washington

Washington Dec 28

Mrs and Mrs Pierre Lorillard Jr have leased for the season the residence of Mr and Mrs Henry Pellew on Massachusetts Avenue.

The New York Times 15th Aug 1902

MRS T. SUFFERN TAILER OBTAINS HER DIVORCE

Mrs Maude Lorillard Tailer of New York city, youngest child of the late Pierre Lorillard, the millionaire tobacco manufacturer, was today granted a divorce...

Mrs Tailer's brother, Pierre Lorillard Jr, is at Saratoga and his wife is at Newport.

[Maude later married again to Cecil Baring, who became the 3rd Baron Revelstoke – see above.]

The New York Times 26th Sept 1902

SOCIETY AT TUXEDO

For the horse show of Friday and Saturday at Tuxedo there are many special functions scheduled. The largest event is the dinner and dance to be given on Friday by Mrs Pierre Lorillard Jr at Keewaydin.

The New York Times 27th Sept 1902

TUXEDO'S HORSE SHOW

The horse reigned at Tuxedo today, and perhaps never before has there been shown so much interest in a horse show by Tuxedo cottagers and their guests as today, when the third annual horse show given by the Tuxedo Park Horse Show Association was begun. Despite the downpour of rain and the muddy wet track, there was a good crowd present. Prominent among the guests was Miss Alice Roosevelt, daughter of President Roosevelt, who was visiting Mrs P. Lorillard Jr.

The New York Times 24th May 1903

TUXEDO PARK HAPPENINGS

Tuxedo has put on her summer appearance and everything is full of life and gayety... Mrs Pierre Lorillard Jr, who passed the spring abroad with her mother, Mrs George Hamilton, at Lucerne, will return to Tuxedo during the first week in June. Keewaydin,

her Tuxedo cottage, is now being put in order for her return.

The New York Times 28th June 1903

SEASON AT TUXEDO

The Cool Weather Prolongs the Stay of the Cottagers

The week at Tuxedo was a very successful one, although the weather, which was cold and wet, was very much against outdoor enjoyment, and in consequence the greater part of the week's entertainment was principally dinners and luncheons... During the week numerous dinners were given by the cottagers. Mrs Pierre Lorillard Jr entertained Saturday and over Sunday as usual.

The New York Times 17th Jan 1904

SOME TEA TABLE CONFIDENCES

Mrs Pierre Lorillard Jr sailed for Europe last week. Mrs Lorillard does not spend much time in New York. Her Winters and Springs are always passed in Europe, where she generally divides her time between Paris, the Riviera and Switzerland. Her mother, Mrs Hamilton, lives abroad. In the Autumn she returns and entertains at her Tuxedo cottage. She is one of the last to remain at the Park, and during her stay there, she is constantly giving dinners and musicales.

The New York Times 26th March 1909

DIED

LORILLARD – On Thursday March 26, at her residence, 2030 Hillyer Place, Washington D.C. Caroline Hamilton Lorillard, beloved wife of Pierre Lorillard.

5 Washington DC March 25th 1909

On 26th March 1909 the American public awoke to find startling headlines in their newspapers. 'Mrs P. Lorillard Jr Ends Her Own Life' was how the San Francisco Call put it. 'Gas taken by leader in Society. Wife of Tobacco magnate dead in her bathroom in Washington.' Within a day or so the news had certainly gone round the English-speaking world and reached even the Australian newspapers.

Why Washington? For some years the Lorillards had been accustomed to be in Washington 'for the season', according to press reports of her death. But when was this? Eight years earlier in 1901 *The New York Times* had reported that Pierre and Caroline 'had leased a residence for the season', but this was dated 28th December suggesting the season meant Christmas and the New Year. Earlier that year the paper had reported that Caroline had left Paris on 8th February, so she must have sailed from America in January. This impression is reinforced by its report on 17th January 1904 that she 'sailed for Europe last week. Mrs Lorillard does not spend much time in New York. Her Winters and Springs are always passed in Europe', where she spent time with her mother who lived there.

Perhaps by 1909 her mother had died and lengthy visits to Europe no longer seemed so attractive. Perhaps she wanted to be more with her husband. The *San Francisco Call* reported a change to her movements: 'Since the Lorillards began passing the winter social seasons in Washington, they have entertained and been entertained widely.' *The New York Times* provided more specific information: 'Mr and Mrs Lorillard have been in the habit for several years of spending part of the season in Washington. They took the house in Hyllier Place last January and expected to remain here until May.'

Possibly the reasons were political as Pierre had ambitions in that respect. He 'at one time took an interest in politics, running without success for the office of Assemblyman' in New York. Of course Washington was warmer than New York in the winter, and before moving to Florida or the west for the winter became popular,

perhaps some of ‘ultra-fashionable’ went there for the winter, where things were maybe livelier than in snowy New York

Whatever the reason for their being in Washington, the reports make clear that the marriage was intact, even though they occupied separate bedrooms. Caroline and Pierre were doing much socialising together, and they had tea together every day: ‘For the first time in weeks she did not have tea with her husband in the afternoon’ *The New York Times* claimed when reporting her death.

To the world in general Caroline seemed her usual social self. ‘Mrs Lorillard had many warm friends in both official and residential circles. She had taken an active part in Washington charities and was among the best known patrons of art in the city.’ (*The New York Times* 26th March 1909) She and Pierre had been out that evening, ‘the guests of Mrs Townsend in Massachusetts Avenue at a dinner given in honour of Lady Paget’. The Brazilian Ambassador and his wife, the Danish Minister and Countess Moltke, the Secretary of the Navy and his wife and three Senators had also been present. Caroline was said to be ‘in fine spirits’. Indeed her friends said she was ‘in an unusually bright mood’ during the evening. She had planned a luncheon party the next day for her friend Mrs Cuyler, who was returning to New York. When she had said good night to Pierre upon returning home from the dinner around midnight, she had shown no sign of unhappiness.

Dr Cuthbert, the family physician, called to the scene when her body was found, said he had not been called to see her for two months. But he added ‘I do know Mrs Lorillard was much alarmed over the condition of her heart. She had suffered considerably. When she visited Paris last summer, she sought an eminent specialist, whom she consulted over the condition of her heart. But when she returned to America she had been ill frequently.’ (*The New York Times* 26th March 1909)

Pierre also knew something was wrong. ‘She had been subject to fits of deep depression lately. She had seemed to have lived on the excitement of social entertainments, and when anything of that nature was going on she was cheerful and happy. But when for any reason there was an interval of comparative quiet she relapsed into despondency’ he told *The New York Times*.

So was it the curse of the Hamiltons she suffered from – a condition that killed so many of Caroline’s British relatives well before their time – clogged-up arteries

leading to angina, which was steadily worsening and causing increasing pain? Or was she clinically depressed? We shall never know because she turned on the gas. The family at first said her death was due to heart disease, then that it was an accident. The coroner insisted it was suicide from inhalation of gas.

6 Suicide?

So what had happened? And why? On leaving her husband, Caroline went into her bedroom, removed the dog collar of diamonds she had been wearing and partly undressed. *The San Francisco Call* claimed when found she was wearing a dressing-gown. The *New York Times*, more precisely, stated ‘she was clad in a silk petticoat and chemisette and had removed one stocking’, although later in its report it also mentioned a wrapper. She had not taken off ‘the costly circle of diamonds that adorned her hair.’ Nor had she slept in her bed. Instead she went into the bathroom and turned on the gas.

At 8 o’clock the next morning the butler came with his master’s breakfast tray and ‘was attracted by the strong odour of gas in the hall.’ It was clearly coming from Caroline’s room. He immediately informed Pierre, who rushed ‘into his wife’s apartment. The gas was flowing from the bathroom door which was partly ajar. On the floor of the bathroom, her head pillowed in her arm, lay Mrs Lorillard.’ (*The New York Times*) The two men carried her into the bedroom where Pierre tried to revive her, while the servants were sent for a doctor. Dr Cuthbert and a Dr Deale arrived and ‘resorted to every scientific means within their power to restore life’ but gave up after an hour.

The Coroner was called, and insisted, against Dr Cuthbert’s wishes, on an autopsy, which was performed apparently very quickly and on the spot by the Deputy Coroner. This found her ‘lungs terribly congested, presumably through inhalation of gas.’ The Coroner, a doctor by profession, immediately signed the death certificate and only then were the police called. But with the cause of death declared by the Coroner, they had no power to conduct a further investigation ‘Hands of police tied’ proclaimed *The New York Times*, clearly indicating the frustration the police felt in being unable to look further into the matter.

But was it suicide? Had she turned on the gas without lighting it deliberately or had she had a heart attack just after turning it on? This possibility does not seem to have been considered by the Coroner. One needs a match or other means to light the gas. No mention is made in the reports of the presence or absence of these. But *The New York Standard* reported that Caroline's rooms had 'led to the conclusion that Mrs Lorillard was most determined in taking her own life.' But it did not elaborate on the reasons for reaching this conclusion. 'It is believed she deliberately inhaled the poisonous fumes until a gentle stupor seized her. Then she calmly lay down upon the rug in the bathroom to sleep into death' (27th March 1909).

Moreover the coroner said that gas was escaping from one or more jets in the bathroom when the body was discovered. He must have been told this. The butler, however, claimed that 'when he first saw Mrs Lorillard stretched out in the bathroom, two gas jets were burning brightly.' but, as *The New York Times* put it, 'it would be manifestly impossible [for her to have died by gas inhalation] if the gas had been lighted.' In any case the butler had smelled gas right out in the hall.

There were other mysteries. A young diplomat, a frequent visitor to the Lorillards, was conveniently not available, though there were reports that he had been seen around town. More intriguing still were the notes found with Caroline. 'Shortly after his arrival the Coroner's attention was called to an envelope found with her' concealed in the wrapper she wore when ... she lay down to die.' On the outside Caroline had written 'in fresh ink: Bury this with my body – unopened.'

The envelope was opened by the Coroner. It contained two notes. Both had been written some time before and one was not in her handwriting, but was 'addressed to her in an informal way' and initialled by the writer. The other, initialled by Caroline, had been written many days before. After being read by the Coroner and Pierre the notes were put back with the body ready to be buried with her. No information was ever released on their contents except that 'they were wholly different in character from those often found' with suicides. Also in the envelope was a chain to which was attached some pendants of the sort girls wore at High School.

7 The Aftermath

As the news got out, her ‘many warm friends’ were shocked and completely unable to explain her death, but they immediately ‘bestirred themselves to give evidence of their friendship.’ Throughout the morning cards and flowers were brought by carriage and automobile. ‘Many beautiful and elaborate wreaths and floral pieces were left. Telegrams and cablegrams of condolence came in profusion. Mr Lorillard was completely worn out and saw no callers.’

At half-past twelve a simple funeral service was conducted at the house by a local Episcopal minister. It was attended mostly by those at the dinner the previous night. At five o’clock the funeral party left the house for the station. Pierre and his elder son Pierre chose to be the only ones to accompany the body. But ‘carriages of society people crowded Massachusetts Avenue’ as the funeral party passed.

The body was taken by train to Jersey City, which was reached just before midnight. From there it was taken to ‘the old home of the Lorillards at Irvington on the beautiful east bank of the Hudson’ for interment (*New York Standard* 27th March 1909). A Kentucky newspaper had it that the body ‘was placed in a receiving vault on Sleepy Hollow cemetery near Tarrytown N.Y.’ and here her grave can still be found.

That was the last of Caroline. What of her family? Her husband Pierre, known as ‘Peery’, lived on until 1940, dying at the age of eighty. He remained single for a long time, before marrying again to Ruth Beard, herself a widow and nearly twenty years younger than him, in 1929. She was the daughter of James J. Hill, builder of the Great Northern Railroad.

Pulling down her house in Tuxedo Park, she put up an enormous mansion of 24,000 square feet, the largest in the Park. This, she claimed, was to keep people employed during the Great Recession. On Pierre’s death she gave this to an Order of Nuns who used it as a boarding school for girls, while she went to live in a more modest house of only 10,000 square feet across the lake.



Pierre Lorillard V1, Caroline's elder son in 1903.

Pierre had continued to work for the family tobacco company as well as having other business interests. One of his hobbies was shooting. His father had probably started going to Guilford County in North Carolina in the 1890s, and Pierre V was still going there in 1924 to shoot quail and doves with other northern industrialists. He may have frightened the birds, but unlike his father he made little impact on the world.

His two sons made even less. Neither had children. Pierre VI had some involvement with the Tuxedo Club and Park, where he lived 'in Spartan lodgings above the tennis club.' He made far-reaching suggestions for the Park's revival (see below). But he died in 1943 just three years after his father, a 'confirmed bachelor' to the end. In his youth he was a keen sportsman, excelling at both tennis and racquets.

His younger brother Griswold, who was in India when their mother died and seems not to have returned home for a year and more, married Mary Green from

Philadelphia in 1916. But they had no children. They too continued to live at Tuxedo and were there in 1930. Griswold's death has not been found, but Mary lived on until 1969, dying at the age of eighty-five.

Of all her immediate family it is Caroline who seems to have made the greatest mark, if only in her own exclusive social circle. There can be no doubt she was well liked and much respected. Moreover there may be more to be revealed on her art patronage and the other charitable work she seems to have been engaged in. What is remarkable is that she took to her life of luxury with ease and style, although it was a life wholly different not only from that of her Scottish grandparents and of her close relatives in rural Wisconsin, but even from that of the religious Phillips or the wealthy Jaffrays. If ever there were parvenus it was Caroline and her father George. There was no hint of blue blood, still less of old money in the Hamiltons. They had always been modest folk.

So her career gave the lie to the claim that only the right family and financial background fitted one for membership of the Tuxedo Park set. It undermined the basic tenets upon which its whole claim to superior status was built. But what of her death? Did this not show that she was at bottom not suited to this sort of life and company? The causes of depression, if that is what she suffered from, and the triggers leading to suicide, if that is what it was, are even today so uncertain that it is surely unwise to put any confidence into such a conclusion. In any case, according to her husband it was the lack of partying not its presence that depressed her.

So we must make our own judgement – or none at all – on the astonishing life and sad death of Caroline. Though scarcely middle-aged when she died, her days of wine and roses lasted a full twenty-eight years, much longer than those enjoyed by the poet. One can only hope her life closed painlessly ‘within a dream.’

The house that she and Pierre built at Tuxedo Park in 1887 was for sale with Sotheby's in October 2012 for a few dollars under four million dollars. It is a large but by no means huge house, comprising 715 square meters with five bedrooms, four ‘full baths’ and two ‘partial baths’. It was designed by Bruce Price, the architect employed by Pierre IV for Tuxedo Park as a whole. The agents claim it as a ‘historic masterpiece... The house façade features a Queen Anne tower, richly ornamental

Renaissance friezes, large Palladian window and Ionic columns.’ So an edifice of total architectural integrity then! The house is situated on Tower Hill in extensive landscaped grounds running to nineteen acres, with superb views of the lake. ‘Inside and out, this is an ideal home, equally suited for family life and gracious entertaining.’ No wonder Caroline liked to call it home. (Quotations from Southeby’s website.)

8 Tuxedo Park and Club

Built on a whim of Caroline's formidable father-in-law, Pierre Lorillard IV, Tuxedo Park was the archetypal exclusive development. Its construction was amazing: in eight months a 'six-thousand acre wilderness of forbidding forests and rocky ravines'^[1] was transformed by the Herculean efforts of eighteen hundred workers of Slav and Italian origin. Thirty miles of roads were constructed as well as everything thought necessary to make a happy and secure retreat for the seriously wealthy – two blocks of shops, stables, an icehouse, fish hatchery, a police station and an 'impregnable gatehouse'. All this was surrounded by a barbed wire fence, eight feet high and over twenty miles long. Served by these facilities were twenty-two so-called 'cottages'. In fact these were sizeable mansions as can be seen from the description of Caroline and Pierre V's house above. The crowning glory was the Clubhouse. All this was sited by a lake in the Ramapo Hills some forty miles north-west of New York city.

The Park was opened on 1st June 1886 and the cream of New York society attended. Lorillard had succeeded in creating 'the nonpareil of secluded enclaves'. But money alone was not enough. It had to be old money; you had to be part of the in-crowd and you had to know how to behave in polite society. 'Though widely imitated, its original select blend of vintage money, congenial habits and impeccable social antecedents has never been successfully duplicated.' It was a marvellously beautiful place filled with dreadfully snobbish people, who were determined to ape the English aristocracy's way of life and forget they were part of a new form of society where 'all men are created equal.'

The clubhouse provided 'facilities for any sport in which ladies and gentlemen would care to indulge.' This of course included various equestrian sports as well as such exotic court games as racquets, otherwise scarcely played outside English Public Schools. Later on a real tennis court was added (court tennis in American usage) for the enjoyment of the 'cottagers' and their guests. The clubhouse also of course

provided facilities where the cottagers and club members could gather for grand dances in the elegant ballroom or cosy tea parties on the terrace.

Entrée to this elite world was controlled in two ways. Unlike most such enclaves, where property ownership provided club membership too, at Tuxedo only those accepted into the club could buy property. As an official of the Tuxedo Park Association put it: 'None [of the property owners] would sell to a person who would be likely to prove an undesirable resident. Such a person would scarcely want to buy either, for it would be decidedly unpleasant to be a resident and not admitted to the club.'

The original twenty-two cottages grew rapidly in number over the next dozen years, by which time nearly one hundred houses were standing, half-hidden in the woods that covered the rough hillsides. And the early 'modest' cottages of just five to ten bedrooms found themselves alongside monstrous mansions, which even Lorillard senior's disapproval could not prevent, as the desire for ostentatious display took over.

The other way to join this exclusive group was to become a club member. At first membership was confined to two hundred gentlemen, but demand was so great that within a year it was increased to four hundred plus residents of the Park. But the founding members seemed to have been able to keep a firm grip on the club not just by controlling membership, but also by laying down unwritten rules of behaviour. Tuxedo became as notorious for its formality as its exclusiveness. 'Tuxedo was the most formal place in the world' was the opinion of Emily Post, daughter of Pierre Lorillard's architect Bruce Price. She grew up in the Park and her famous writings on etiquette were based on her experience of society there. 'Nobody ever waved or hello-ed or hi-ed at Tuxedo. You bowed when you shook hands... And first names were considered very bad form.'

It was all very un-American. No wonder the anglophile William Waldorf Astor, 'the richest and most insistently aristocratic' resident, found it the only place in America fit for a gentleman. But finding the rest of his country unbearable, he soon fled to England and obtained what he was unable to get in the States, a hereditary title. Another early defector was Pierre Lorillard IV himself, the founding father. After ten

years, his rows with his wife made Tuxedo too uncomfortable to stay at and he went to live with his mistress at his racing stables or in England.

He kept tight control of the Tuxedo Park Association, however, until his death in 1901. Pierre V, Caroline's husband, then took over from him right up to his own death in 1940. Pierre VI succeeded him briefly until he died in 1943. By then Tuxedo was a very different place. Death, taxes, new money, changing fashions and the Great Depression had all made their mark on Pierre Lorillard's original vision. Pierre VI, Caroline's elder son, who lived in 'Spartan quarters above the tennis club', did not believe in blue blood and wanted to bring in 'red-blooded young people who may have very modest incomes.'

Since then the fence has been torn down literally but not metaphorically. The grand mansions may have been taken over by institutions or pulled down, but this is still a private gated community, open only to residents. Occasional tourist trips conducted by approved bodies seem to be the only outside presence allowed. In view of its historic and architectural importance, Tuxedo Park was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

Note 1. All quotations are from *American Heritage* – see acknowledgements.

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Clearly too I owe much to the newspaper reports of the time, especially *The New York Times* which reported on the 'ultra-fashionable' with such enthusiasm over the years. Also to *American Heritage* on whose excellent article Tuxedo Park (1978 volume 29, issue 5) I have based my description of Tuxedo Park and Club.

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Note on the author

John Hamilton is Caroline's first cousin twice removed. He has done much research not only on the Hamiltons, but also on the other lines of his ancestry. He lives in England but has been to Fifth Avenue, New York, and looks forward on his next visit to the USA to taking a trip to Tuxedo, especially as he was unaware of its existence – as a place – before researching Caroline's history. .

P.S. Since writing the above, he has moved to Ascot and lives opposite the racecourse from which Pierre Lorillard IV began his final journey.